

## CLAIMS

1. An automated tournament system for use with a game machine, the game machine implementing the system when placed in a tournament mode, the system comprising:

(a) a plurality of tournament games playable by a plurality of players on the game machine, each of the plurality of tournament games generating a total player score upon completion of game play, the player scores being used to determine the tournament winners;

(b) means for preprogramming at least one sequence of tournament games from the plurality of tournament games; and

(c) means for programming a tournament period for each tournament game, the preprogrammed tournament game for each sequence being playable during the programmed tournament period for the respective sequence.

2. A system according to claim 1 wherein a plurality of sequences of tournament games are preprogrammed to run simultaneously.

3. A system according to claim 1 further comprising:

(d) means for preprogramming the at least one sequence to either continuously repeat or to end after the last tournament in the sequence is completed.

4. A system according to claim 1 further comprising a non-tournament mode, at least some of the plurality of tournament games being playable in the non-tournament mode.

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5. A method of conducting automated tournaments in a game machine, the game machine implementing the tournaments when placed in a tournament mode, the game machine including a plurality of tournament games playable by a plurality of players on the game machine, each of the plurality of tournament games generating a total player score upon completion of game play, the player scores being used to determine the tournament winners, the method comprising:

(a) preprogramming at least one sequence of tournament games from the plurality of tournament games; and

(b) programming a tournament period for each tournament game, the preprogrammed tournament game for each sequence being playable during the programmed tournament period for the respective sequence.

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6. A method according to claim 5 wherein step (a) includes preprogramming a plurality of sequences of tournament games to run simultaneously.

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7. A method according to claim 6 further comprising:

(c) preprogramming the at least one sequence to either continuously repeat or to end after the last tournament in the sequence is completed.

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